

PROPOSALS FOR ADAPTATION TO NEW ECONOMIC CHANGE THROUGH THE PROMOTION AND SELECTION OF HOLIDAY VILLAGES IN ROMANIA

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***Abstract:** Any settlement that is chosen to promote rural tourism is based on the following fundamental components: the centre of the village where most households are concentrated and which expresses the economic functions of the village; its outskirts (work area) is the land beyond the center of the village that supports all agricultural occupations, craft, trade, tourism; the population is represented by demographic indicators: birth rate, mortality, natural growth, morbidity, density. Identification and selection criteria for tourist villages are the potential of the natural environment composed of natural elements with great appeal, variety of landscapes (mountain, Alpine hills, lakes, delta), ambient aesthetic beauty (slopes, canyons, gorges, caves), wildlife hunting, forests; accessibility is dependent on geographical location in the territory and the main communication routes that connect with the nearest urban centers.*

Also, the presence of cultural and ethnographic elements are the most attractive ones for tourists; demographic and economic potential have an important role in the development of rural tourism in a village through: supporting agricultural and non-agricultural occupations, transmission of traditions and customs from generation to generation; preserving environmental quality has become an important milestone for the selection and preservation of rural tourist elements.

Keywords: fruit-growing and vine-growing villages, curative value, itinerant rural tourism, gastronomic festivals, touristic product.

JEL Classification Codes: Q13, O18, L83

INTRODUCTION

In the past 20 years in Romania were selected and classified the following tourist villages such as: fruit-growing and vine-growing villages located in hilly and sub-Carpathian areas, where alongside fruit and vine plantations, people are also involved in growing livestock and various folk crafts : Agapia, Nucșoara, Lerești; ethnographic and folk villages have become famous for the architecture of houses, interior furniture, folk seams, handicrafts, wood and stone sculptures, ceramics, of which we mention: Sibiel, Bogdan Vodă, Vicovu de Sus, Marginea, Săpânța; pastoral villages are located in high mountain area, where people are growing livestock, such as Maramureș, Argeș, Vâlcea, Sibiu, Vrancea, hunting and fishing villages are scattered in many picturesque regions in the Maramureș Depression, Depression Brașov, the Danube Valley and Delta, Siret Meadow, Apuseni Mountains; villages where sports activities can be organized are found in mountainous and high hills areas, deltas, along

rivers, around lakes where you can practice winter sports, water sports or some adventure sports (rock climbing, gliding), such as: Fundata, Văliug, Budeasa, Mila 23, Murighiol¹.

For rural tourism in some villages a few attractive features are highlighted: the recreational, aesthetic and landscape value, in many occasions due to the choice of destination (mountains, hills, plains, seaside or delta); curative value (spa) of the bioclimate or natural factors in the area; mountains, caves, streams, wildlife resources, the snow layer and cognitive value for components designated as parks, botanical gardens and zoos, scientific reserves and natural monuments.

1. THEMATIC AREAS OF THE RURAL PRODUCT

Thematic areas of the touristic product can take different aspects, tour organizers being able to develop specialized versions of programs around rural vacations. The social contacts specific to this environment have increased, as well as various options which include a weekend spent at a farm or thematic programs related to the characteristics of the area: hunting, fishing, taking up and practicing riding.

Turismul rural permite desfășurarea unor activități specifice, ce pot fi încadrate în două forme distincte de turism și anume: turismul de sejur și cel itinerant. Rural tourism allows carrying out specific activities that can be classified into two distinct forms of tourism, namely: stay-in and traveling tourism.

Stay-in tourism can offer:

- close study of nature: observing plants and animals, birds, photographing, filming
- hunting, fishing, riding;
- knowing the ancestral values;
- participating in festivals, traditions, rural traditions;
- practicing sports that require knowledge of the environment: touristic orientation, automobilism, motorcycling or bike riding on a varied terrain
- organizing conventions, symposia, conferences or seminars at various levels;
- visit handicraft workshops.

Traveling rural tourism can also be organized and spontaneous. In order to develop this form of tourism, an important role will be played by the existence of an organization or a specialized organizational framework to facilitate the booking system, confirm bookings and ensure service delivery in accordance with the order received.

Tourism products that can be offered to tourists in this form of tourism can have the following themes:

- gems of Romanian song and dance and the participation in celebrations, social evenings, competitions and folk festivals
- meeting folk craftsmen: potters, furriers, wood carving etc.
- On the trail of outlaws (woven with outlaw landmarks, inns, popular theater, museum points);
- Fish trail - in fisheries - with basic services and fishing trips;
- Wine Road - visiting vineyards and wine tasting
- Gastronomic festivals:
- In the Footsteps of Dracula: visiting the artefacts that remind us of Vlad Tepes and staying overnight in rural areas, with evening campfires and songs, stories around the fire

¹ Adapted after :Câdea Melinda, Erdeli G., Simon Tamara, Peptenatu D., 2003, *Romania's touristic potential and touristic space planning*, University Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 15-25.

- Visiting: Brătianu, George Enescu, Ciprian Porumbescu, Panait Istrati or other personalities and artistic symbols.²

Equally attractive are the circuits and routes that will include parks and nature reserves in mountain areas, caving trails, travel by boat and why not with rafts.

To support and encourage itinerary tourism, the organizers will take into account the need for materials that will be a support and means of presentation, such as: calendar of rural events, guides, maps, monographs, brochures, catalogs.

To determine the type of touristic village, it is necessary, along with the desire and intention of the organizers, the respective tourist village meet an amount of natural and historical conditions, social and economic objectives that define and are characteristic to each type of village.

These minimum conditions that a village must meet to become a touristic village refer to: the existence of households to provide accommodation and meals (half board or full board), according to certain standards developed by the Ministry of Regional and Rural Development, location in a naturally attractive area, without sources of pollution, accessibility, availability of rich tourist resources that can be valued by carrying out varied holiday activities, rich folk and ethnographic traditions, traditional occupations

In relation to the variety and value of touristic resources, the activity that takes place in a touristic village is characterized by a greater or lesser complexity, but generally includes the following components: accommodation, general trade, catering, treatment, entertainment, promotion and publicity, organization, development and planning.³

Any rural settlement is based on the following fundamental components:

- **center of the village** where most households are concentrated and which expresses the economic functions of the village;
- **the outskirts (work area)** is the land beyond the center of the village that supports all agricultural occupations, craft, trade, tourism, etc.;
- 1. **the population** is represented by demographic indicators: birth rate, mortality, natural growth, morbidity, density, etc.

Each village can have different meanings depending tourist natural resources and man, the hospitality mentality. Currently there are several criteria for identifying and selecting the tourist villages, which are:

- **Potential of the natural environment**, composed of natural elements with great appeal, variety of landscapes (mountain, Alpine hills, lakes, delta), ambient aesthetic beauty (slopes, canyons, gorges, caves), wildlife hunting, forestry
- **The degree of accessibility** is based on the geographical location in the territory and the main communication routes that connect with the nearest urban centers. Accessibility plays an important role in reducing time spent traveling and to reduce fatigue while going the distances;
- **The presence of cultural and ethnographic elements** represents the most attractive element for tourists. Their value is expressed by the characteristics of traditional architecture, secular or religious, the interior of dwellings, types of exterior stylings, stone and wood

² Miu Florentina, 2011, „*Ecotourism and rural tourism*”, University of Pitești Publishing House, p. 263,

³ Adaptation after :Glăvan V., 2003, *Rural Tourism, Agricultural tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Ecotourism*, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 78

sculpture, folk costume, stitches and fabric art, local folklore, handicrafts and household utensils;

- **The demographic and economic potential** has an important role in the development of rural tourism services in a village through: supporting agricultural and non-agricultural occupations, transmitting traditions and customs from generation to generation
- **Maintaining a quality environment** has become an important milestone for the selection and conservation of touristic elements in rural areas.

For the development and organization of Romanian villages and tourist regions as a whole, certain prerequisites are necessary, which are at the same time at the basis of a multi-criteria analysis of Romanian villages with tourist valences:⁴

- a) a strong correlation between the size and dynamics of touristic services and overall economic and social development of the country, of each county and rural locality in part;
- b) Increase of services and of the population employed in areas other than services of the total of employed population in the context of the national economy, increasing the capacity represents a solution for touristic services, for the workforce cut off from other sectors;
- c) changes in the basic travel services, accommodation and catering - in the total revenue per day in accordance with international standards
- d) development, modernization and strengthening of the touristic heritage, concern for achieving an important investment volume prioritarily directed to strengthening and modernizing as a first step, an existing touristic structure, building small and medium capacity objectives in the areas and localities with touristic potential previously not exploited according to touristic demand, amplification of equipment for leisure, tourism infrastructure development, without which Romanian tourism can not compete internationally.

2. PROPOSALS FOR PROMOTING THE CONCEPT, „*HOLIDAY VILLAGE IN ROMANIA*”

Romania has great potential to develop agro-tourism, its practice being not only possible but also very necessary at this stage.

Specialists consider that the whole policy of rural tourism development in Romania should be in a close collaboration with EUROGÎTES and by working on a partnership basis with regional or national associations. In this respect, the National Association for Rural, Ecological and Cultural Tourism in Romania has affiliated to EUROGÎTES and have resolved on concluding association or partnership agreements with associations for rural tourism in some European countries or regions⁵.

It is also necessary to form a group of experts capable to provide technical assistance and hold courses with the heads of local power structures and owners of rural tourism structures on marketing issues, planning and interior partition of accommodation spaces, and

⁴ Glăvan V., 2003, *Rural Tourism, Agricultural tourism, Sustainable Tourism, Ecotourism*, Economic Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 102

⁵ Nistoreanu P., Țigu G., Popescu D., Pădurean M., Talpeș A., Tala M., Condulescu C., 2003, *Ecotourism and rural tourism*, ASE Publishing House, Bucharest, p. 68.

training and food services, classification and quality standards, catering and dining rules, rules of hygiene and ecology, behavior in dealing with tourists, information system (stock records, reservation system), etc., the selection being made by experts of the National Association, and for their training EUROGÎTES support should be sought.

In these circumstances, the attributions of the National Association for Rural Ecological and Cultural Tourism refers to:

- promoting and defending member interests
- cooperation with counterparts in other countries, with EUROGÎTES and other European bodies
- coordination and collaboration with regional subsidiaries
- participation in exchanges between regional centers
- the regular holding of seminars on environmental issues, including support from some students and university professors
- organizing participation in fairs and promotional and marketing activities, including organizing the participation in national and international tourism fairs
- liaising with the media and travel media Association
- selection, preparation and coordination of the activity of the body of experts
- prepare a group of interpreter guides, attendants or specialized on the main rural tourism activities
- organization of courses aimed at improving professional training for local center leaders and members of the association

Currently, about 40% of rural tourism is takes place in unapproved guesthouses, many of which do not meet quality standards. ANTREC includes over 2,000 guesthouses ranging from 1 to 5 rosettes.

CONCLUSIONS

Following the original study "*Selecting and organizing holiday villages in Romania*" on management principles, elements of tourism infrastructure in rural areas, resource valuation practices available to touristic units, as well as management levels of rural tourism activities in the area, the following conclusions can be drawn:

1. South-Muntenia has a varied natural and cultural potential, and rural tourism is able to make them functional on the market
2. Natural heritage, valuable at European level, is in conservation process and is introduced in touristic trails, but not enough as to effectively supplement the scarce budgetary financial resources necessary for nature protection and research;
3. Each area of touristic interest in the South-Muntenia Region, regardless of specialization, requires a plan of strategic management and use in negotiations to attract and exploit local and foreign investment
4. Tourism development in rural areas is a good alternative to rural households, which along with farming practices can serve a large number of tourists in agricultural guesthouses or representative farms
5. The concept of "*Holiday village*" is one of the most profitable forms of tourism for the touristic potential situated at the outskirts of rural communities and is currently gaining more popularity.

Based on the enumerated conclusions I make the following recommendations:

1. Including tourist resources of the South-Muntenia Region in the economic cycle by developing a network of tourist areas
2. Application of various forms of institutionalization of tourism resources for their proper management for nonpolluting economic purposes
3. Location in tourist areas of a large variety of activities serving guests to create a consistent and constant flow of tourists, including out of season
4. Encouraging rural tourism investors as an alternative to agricultural activities by delimiting local territories for touristic specialization, realization of strategic plans and management of touristic areas, improvement of business management tools with functionality close to tourist resources areas
5. Developing strategic partnerships public - private and local – foreign for the development of rural tourism in areas with significant touristic resources

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